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• ✦ • ORATION • ✦ •

OF

Hon. Charles H. Bartlett • ✦ •

AT THE

• DEDICATION • OF • THE •

• ✦ • Soldiers' • Monument

AT

AMHERST, N. H.

• • • ✦ JUNE • 19, • 1890 ✦ • • •



ORATION

HON. CHARLES H. BARTLETT,

OF MANCHESTER, N. H.

DEDICATION

SOLDIERS' MONUMENT

AMHERST, N. H.,

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ual and ineradicable, conferred upon it, at the baptismal font, the name of the most conspicuous military character then associated with the colonies, that of the commander-in-chief of the British forces of North America, — a name which it has borne and honored for more than a century, and a name which is never spoken by son or daughter, however widely roaming, but with true filial pride and affection.

But however prominent or conspicuous the military element may appear in the inception, it must not be inferred or understood that the moral or intellectual welfare of the people was overlooked or even subordinated, for we find that in the sub-division of this grant, one lot was assigned to the first settled minister, one lot to the ministry, and one to that great American institution, the common school.

So far, then, as the art of war entered into the habits of the pioneer settlers, it was an art cultivated and practiced for defensive purposes only, to give protection in the field and security at the fireside against assaults that were never tempered with mercy nor conducted by the rules of civilized warfare, against a foe who recognized no non-combatants, who respected not defenceless womanhood, the innocence of childhood, or the helplessness of the couch of sickness and pain, a foe who came not with drum beat and banners waving, but skulking in ambush, or like a thief at night, under cover of its darkness.

So much of the knowledge of the art of war, so much of skill and accomplishment in its practice as would enable them to cope with this cunning and relentless foe, was a necessity of their existence. Undisturbed and unmolested, the busy hand seized the implements of husbandry and





may be some consolation to know and to feel that these changes have been wrought by forces and agencies over which her people could exercise no control, and which they were powerless to resist.

The story of the part taken by the town of Amherst in the war of the Revolution, which naturally claims something of our thought to-day, is a grand, beautiful, and touching story, unsurpassed in history or fiction, legend or song, for ardent, lofty patriotism, dauntless courage, and sublime devotion to country and to liberty. None were on the field before her, none surpassed her in soldierly achievements. Before the opening gun had fired the shot "heard round the world," before the fields of Lexington and Concord were baptized in immortality, before the clash of arms and the shock of battle on the heights of Bunker Hill, before any of these had electrified the land, Amherst had lifted her hand and struck her initial blow for liberty.

On the memorable night of December 16, 1773, while the Dartmouth and her consorts were idly rocking on the restless tide in Boston Harbor, the "sons of liberty," few in numbers, but daring and resolute in purpose, were silently and impatiently preparing to open the first act in the great drama which was to settle the momentous issue so freighted with good or ill to human kind, whether this land should henceforth bear the blight and mildew of the tyrant's tread or smile and blossom with liberty and become laden with the fruits of a marvelous and unparalleled prosperity. It was not the ships nor their cargoes that excited such terrible resentment, for these were useful, harmless, valuable, and welcome ; but those cargoes, however harmless or valuable, could not pass the custom-house gates, through



under the immortal Stark, aided in beating back the invaders at Bennington, while on other fields, wherever New Hampshire troops were engaged, her sons were found in force and everywhere distinguished themselves for the highest soldierly qualities.

Her roll of three hundred, who went forth from her hill-sides and valleys ready and eager to sacrifice their all for liberty and independence, constitutes a galaxy of heroes unsurpassed in historic record. Their fame may not be so widely celebrated in song and eulogy as the immortal three hundred Spartans, who, under Leonidas, disputed the pass of Thermopylæ against the Persian host on the Maliae coast, but their patriotism was no less ardent, their courage as unflinching unto death as theirs of ancient renown.

I have dwelt thus much at length upon the historical features of your town, because as I looked into the record and ran my eye over its pages so illumined with grand and heroic achievements, it seemed to me that I could not pass over in silence this glorious and distinguished past without injustice to those to whose memory this column is to-day dedicated.

Glorious, indeed, it is, in the light of their own achievements, but from the open page of history, which tells the story of ancestral valor, sacrifice, and worth, there comes a ray of golden light to encircle and illuminate it with a halo of glory, which the mist of a century has not dimmed, and the mists of other centuries cannot dissipate.

When I have said that the noble dead whose memory to-day this vast throng is assembled to honor, were the descendants of such an ancestry and that they were



keeping of friends who, whatever might befall him, would have a loving care and solicitude for them. The fact that fifty per cent of all liable to military duty shouldered their muskets and went to the field of battle, shows how deeply and profoundly this people were moved by the great conflict, and how the martial spirit that so distinguished their ancestry had descended without abatement through succeeding generations. The Home Guard, which met in the spring and summer of 1861 upon this common for drill and practice in the manual of arms, was but the re-appearance in other flesh and bone of the Minute Men who learned the same maneuvers on the same spot nearly a century before. Thus history repeats itself. Thus in the mirror of the present we see the glories of the past. True, the issue was not the same. The old question of independence or of subordination to another sovereignty was settled by those Minute Men and their comrades in arms, and settled forever; but in the progress of our national development, dangers within had been evolved no less serious than those which our fathers encountered from without.

The assaulted flag, the imperiled national unity, summoned to their defence the same sterling quality of patriotism, of courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice, which gave to the United States of America a place among the nations of the earth. The call came as suddenly, as unexpectedly, as the lightning's flash from a cloudless sky, but the response was ready and there was no parley for delay. There was no blanching of cheek, no tremor of voice, no faltering of step, no counting of cost. War was new, but the high sense of duty was old, and the qualities



the care and keeping of the youth of Amherst, who will behold that day, I commit this thought.

Not one jot or tittle would we abate from the full measure of the glory of those who fell and perished in the struggle; yet it is but just to those survivors who passed the same ordeal, the same exposure, to say that it takes the same soldierly qualities to face death upon the battle-field that it does to suffer it. Whether the soldier falls or survives is the mere accident of fortune, and we should not meet the full requirements of the occasion did we not say to the members of the Charles H. Phelps Post of the G. A. R., whom a kind Providence has permitted to join in these solemn and impressive ceremonies, to all her sons who have come from far and near to join in this tribute to their fallen comrades, that Amherst remembers to-day that you all stood in battle array where those men fell as ready to join the ranks of the fallen as to fight on with the survivors.

There was a mingling of philosophy and grim humor in the remark of the brave Irish soldier who was stricken to insensibility on the battle-field, but who, on recovering consciousness, said to the faithful chaplain who was tenderly bending over him: "Sir, it is hard luck to suffer the agonies of death, and then be robbed by a minister of the glory of dying in battle."

We remember the fallen when and where they fell and our imaginations canopy the spot with a halo of undying glory; but we are not so apt to remember that those who fought by their side courted the track of the deadly missile as bravely and as serenely as they whose fate it was to encounter it on its death-dealing mission.





of war. It is easy to see why this was so. The ranks were filled from the same sources from which they were officered. They came from every profession; from colleges and seminaries of learning; from banks, counting rooms, shops, mills, farms; from every intellectual calling and every branch and line of industry. In the fact that he felt himself fit to command, the soldier saw no impediment to his serving in the ranks

To strike a blow for his country, to strike it effectually and well, was his absorbing thought and ambition. If he found that opportunity in the ranks, he was content and so fought on to the end. Our armies graduated soldiers enough at the close of the war, fit to command, to officer all the armies on earth and officer them well.

We find to-day in Congress, in the executive chairs of state, in judicial and official stations of every grade, men who went into the war with the musket upon the shoulder, and laid down the same weapon at its close; not because they did not deserve promotion, not because they were not fitted for other duty of an apparently higher grade, but because they had found the place where the country needed them; where they could do good work, effective work; and with that they were content.

A regimental officer, whose command was famed for gallant conduct, on being asked to name men from his ranks for promotion, proudly responded: "If I should promote all of my men who deserve it, I should have a regiment of officers with not a private in it."

What wonder that such an army proved itself invincible and all-conquering? What end could come to such a struggle save that at Appomattox? The theorists who said



eloquent lips than mine when opportunity is fitting, which soon enough must come. On this occasion we are also exceptionally honored by the presence of the survivors of that regiment which contained in its ranks so large a proportion of the Amherst soldiers, and which was so largely recruited from this county. Their most welcome presence enhances the interest, broadens and deepens the significance of the occasion, and gives stronger impulse to the patriotic ardor and sentiment which it is so well calculated to inspire.

Their presence here as an organization, a quarter of a century after their muster out and disbandment, proves the oneness of purpose which actuated them, and how deep and lasting are the friendships, born of long and close association, under circumstances of the greatest peril and danger. Such conditions develop the highest and noblest qualities of the human soul, and create a brotherhood that never loosens its grasp till touched by the cold finger that awaits us all. There is no chain which so binds men together as that whose links are welded in the white heat of battle.

If anything was wanting to show the perfect amalgamation of our foreign born with native American citizenship, the Tenth furnished it. If anything was wanting to show that in assuming that high duty our foreign born embraced the full measure of patriotic sentiment and devotion to the fortunes of their adopted country, the Tenth supplied it. If anything was lacking to prove that they were ready to defend her honor and uphold her authority by every sacrifice, even unto death, with all the ardor, impetuosity, and enthusiasm characteristic of their race, the Tenth removed



the war of the Rebellion settled the question of national unity. The great source of internal dissension, of sectional animosity, has been forever eradicated. It is no longer a "house divided against itself," but with unity of purpose and fraternity of feeling, its fast multiplying millions are now coursing over the highway of empire, with possibilities limited only by the measure of fidelity to true citizenship.

To the cultivation and the development of that citizenship this work directly and most powerfully tends. Monumental columns, heroic statues, and memorial edifices are most striking and impressive patriotic literature, a literature that is read by all beholders, learned and unlearned, a literature that is common to all nations and all races of men. To the American, the German, the Frenchman, to all of every race and nationality, though speaking no tongue save that of their ancestors, it tells the same story. It addresses itself intelligently to every understanding and awakens common emotions in every heart in whatever clime the eye falls upon it.

As a book of history it is always open and its pages are ever exposed to the gaze of mankind. It never slumbers on neglected shelves, and the accumulating dust of years never gathers upon it. The busiest son of toil finds ample opportunity to peruse it and enrich his understanding by the story it impresses upon all, while his soul is ennobled by the contemplation of the lofty examples it spreads before him. It cannot be monopolized by the rich alone, for it is never closed to the poorest and the humblest. It is most honorable in its authorship no less than in its commemoration of noble deeds and the perpetuation of names









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